

## Use of Inhalants among Adolescents

### Background:

- Inhalants are a very easy to acquire group of items that are repeatedly abused but not considered drugs by users because of how easy they are to get.
- They are found in all stores and are items you would never think are abused and harmful if used incorrectly.
- Inhalants are a group of chemicals, like volatile solvents, gases, and nitrites. (DEA, 2005)
- These chemicals contain vapors that generate psychoactive effects. (NIDA, 2005)
- The following are categories that inhalants fall into:
  - The items that make up the volatile solvents group is paint thinners or removers, degreasers, dry-cleaning fluids, gasoline, glue, correction fluids, felt tip markers, electronic contact cleaners. (NIDA, 2005)
  - Aerosols are things like spray paints, hair spray, deodorant sprays, aerosol computer cleaning items, vegetable oil sprays. (NIDA, 2005)
  - Gases include butane lighters, propane tanks, whipping aerosols or dispensers, and refrigerant gases, ether, chloroform, halothane, and nitrous oxide. (NIDA, 2005)
  - The nitrites group is made up of cyclohexyl, butyl, and amyl nitrites. These are in items like video head cleaner, room odorizer, leather cleaner and liquid aroma. (NIDA, 2005)
- These items go by many different names on the streets;
  - Air blast, Ames, Amys, Aroma of Men, Bolt, Boppers, Bullet, Bullet bolt, Buzz bomb, Discorama, Heart-on, Moon gas, Pearls, Poor man's pot, Poppers, Satan's secret, Snotballs, and Texas shoe shine are just some of the names these things go by on the streets. (DEA, 2005)
- Because of the easy access, cheapness, and ease of hiding and transport, these items are the first things that are abused by children. (DEA, 2005)
- The number of youths that used inhalants was 17.1 percent among 8th-graders, 13.1 percent among 10th grade students, and 11.4 percent among 12th-graders in 2005. (NIDA, 2005)

## Statement of the Problem:

- Healthy People 2010 says inhalant use is a problem and only getting worse.
- 2.9 percent of children and teens between the ages of 12-19 have used inhalants in 1998. (Healthy People, 2007)
- Healthy People 2010 stated about 12.6 million people, 12 years and older reported using inhalants in their lifetime. (Healthy People, 2007)
- Among children 12 - 17 years old, there was no big difference between the amount of males and females in inhalant use. (Healthy People, 2007)
- Whites and Hispanics were more likely to report past year and lifetime inhalant use than African Americans.
- There is also a higher rate among Whites than Hispanics. (Healthy People, 2007)
- Most abused inhalants create a short-term high like those of anesthetics, which slow down body function. (NIDA, 2005)
- Almost immediately after inhalation, the user is affected by the chemicals, experiencing symptoms like those of alcohol use. (DEA, 2005)
- The effects of using inhalants, which take place almost immediately after use, are garbled speech, inability to synchronize movements, euphoria, wooziness, and possibly lightheadedness, hallucinations, and delusions. (DEA, 2005)
- Inhalants can cause irregular and rapid heart rates and cause heart failure and death within minutes of using. (DEA, 2005)
- Long-term effects of use are kidney abnormalities, liver damage, memory attention problems, diminished non-verbal intelligence, and death from heart failure, asphyxiation, or aspiration. (DEA, 2005)
- Withdrawal may occur along with long-term inhalant use. (White House Drug Policy, 2007)
- The Drug Abuse Warning Network estimated that in 2005, 4312 visits to the emergency room were linked to inhalant use. (White House Drug Policy, 2007)
- Most youngsters just aren't aware of the serious dangers of inhalants because of the ease to obtain these items. They think things like air fresheners

can't be bad if inhaled because they are breathed in when they are sprayed into the air.

### **Epidemiological Picture of the problem:**

- Among students that were surveyed as part of a study, 29.2% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 40.1% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 51.2% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported abuse of inhalants in their lifetime. (White House Drug Policy, 2007)
- The group most affected by inhalant abuse is young people, 12-17 years old. (Healthy People, 2007)
- There are no considerable differences between males and females in inhalant misuse.
- White youths are at the highest likeliness for inhalant abuse. (Healthy People, 2007)
- Whites and Hispanics are more likely to abuse inhalants than African Americans. (Healthy People, 2007)
- People in urban areas were more likely to use inhalants than those not in urban areas. (Healthy People, 2007)
- Residents of the western states were also more likely to use inhalants than any other region. (Healthy People, 2007)

### **Solutions to the Problem:**

National Inhalant Prevention Coalition  
(<http://www.inhalants.org>)

The National Inhalant Prevention Coalition is a non-profit organization based in Austin, Texas. They are a public-private attempt formed to encourage knowledge of the under-publicized problem of inhalant use. They gather information, make inhalant issues known in the media, provide training and technical assistance, and holds campaigns to inform the public about inhalant abuse. They also work with state agencies, schools, businesses, trade associations, media, law enforcement, Poison Control Centers and interfaith groups all over the country to educate people about the effects and conduct prevention campaigns designed to educate youth and adults about these dangerous gateway drugs. With their resource bank, media relations, targeted initiatives and national contacts, they put individuals in contact with the latest research, the best ideas, and successful programs.

The New England Inhalant Abuse Prevention Coalition  
(<http://www.inhalantprevention.org>)

The New England Inhalant Abuse Prevention Coalition is a group committed to reducing the impact of inhalant abuse on children and youth. They go about doing this by informing parents and youth-serving professionals to apply the best practices in inhalant abuse prevention. They teach younger children the horrible results of using these drugs, trying not to increase their curiosity into what it feels like. They base their group on teaching people about these drugs and supplying information otherwise not accessible to them. They try to raise awareness of the problem of inhalant abuse.

Inhalants.DrugAbuse.Gov  
(<http://inhalants.drugabuse.gov/>)

This is a government based Web site that goes about helping by providing enormous amounts of information about inhalants. It supplies parents with things like signs of inhalant abuse, items that are commonly used, and medical consequences of using them. This site is for the parents to research and be able to explain these things to their children. This site uses the idea of informing the public in order to address this issue. If the parents don't inform the children then nobody probably will.

### **Internet Resources:**

Freevibe.com

This site provides information on inhalants and is meant for the user to read and become informed more about what they are doing to themselves. The site would be a good recommendation from parents to children.

Medline Plus  
(<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/inhalants.html>)

This site is full of information and resources for parents to become informed of the problem. It has many articles referring to preventing, diagnosing, and other related issues. Great site for a parent who thinks inhalants may be an issue with their child.

Drug Story

([http://www.drugstory.org/drug\\_info/inhalants.asp](http://www.drugstory.org/drug_info/inhalants.asp))

This Web site has a large collection of links relating to any information you may need about inhalants. It also contains links to organization and groups dedicated to helping children with inhalant abuse problems.

**Bibliography:**

Healthy People 2010, <http://www.healthypeople.gov>

National Institute on Drug Abuse, <http://www.nida.nih.gov>

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, <http://www.usdoj.gov>

White House Drug Policy,  
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/inhalants/>

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